

Whitewater Canal collection

S2328

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February 12, 2016

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Books and Manuscripts
140 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204
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Summary Information

Repository	Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Wesler, Charles S., 1866-1962
Title	Whitewater Canal collection
Date	1829-1949
Extent	0.01 Cubic feet 1 folder
Language	English
Text [Folder]	S2328

Preferred Citation

Whitewater Canal collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library

Biographical Note

Charles S. Wesler was born on December 29, 1866 in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, to Christopher and Margaret Hornberger) Wesler. In 1892, he married Emma Louise Unnewehr, with whom he had six children. Wesler was a resident of Batesville, Indiana, where he initiated a campaign in 1937 to resotore the Whitewater Canal. Wesler died in Batesville, Indiana, on August 16, 1962.

Historical Note

"As settlers moved into the old Northwest Territory after 1800, transportation routes became an important priority. Indiana's brief experience with canal building began with the passage of the Indiana Mammoth Internal Improvement Act of 1836. Whitewater Canal was one of several projects funded by this act. Early canals were hand-dug waterways meant to bring goods and people inland. They were located near rivers and natural waterways which provided the necessary water. Draft animals pulled long, narrow boats by a rope next to the canal on a towpath. Although canal travel was painfully slow, this method was much better than wagons for large, heavy loads. The Whitewater Canal started in Lawrenceburg and originally ended at Cambridge City, on the Old National Road. Hagerstown merchants financed an extension to their town, making the canal 76 miles in length. The state of Ohio also built a 25-mile spur linking Cincinnati to the canal. Along the canal, 56 locks accommodate a fall of nearly 500 feet. After Indiana went bankrupt in the 1840s, private enterprises stepped up to complete the canal. After the canal transportation era ended with arrival of the railroads, the canal was used as a source of water power for many grist mills and other industry. The Metamora Grist Mill is an example, using water power to produce corn meal, available for purchase in the gift shop, for over 100 years. The State of Indiana assumed management of a 14-mile section of the Whitewater Canal in 1946 and, today, operates a horse-drawn canal boat and the grist mill. Visitors can take a leisurely 25-minute cruise on the Ben Franklin III. During the cruise, they pass the Duck Creek Aqueduct, a covered bridge that carries the canal 16 feet over Duck Creek. It is believed to be the only structure of its kind in the nation."

Sources:

Text from Indiana State Museum. "Whitewater Canal." Accessed February 12, 2016. <http://www.indianamuseum.org/explore/whitewater-canal>.

Scope and Contents

This collection includes materials from Charles Wesler of Batesville, Indiana ranging from 1829 to 1949, regarding the construction and restoration of the Whitewater Canal. Items in the collection are a 7-page original typed historical narrative titled, "Who Pioneered in the Reconstruction of the White Water Canal?"; a 14-page appendix of subject matter relevant to the history of the Whitewater Canal; 26 original bills and receipts from merchant George Tousey of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, relevant to the construction of the Whitewater Canal, dated 1829-1846; and copies of correspondence relevant to the restoration of the Whitewater Canal, dated 1937-1949.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by subject.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Rare Books and Manuscripts

Conditions Governing Access

Restrictions apply. Contact the repository for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Custodial History

This collection was received by Rare Books and Manuscripts as a records donation from Charles Wesler on May 1942.

Accruals

No further additions are expected.

Processing Information

Collection processing completed 2015/12/17 by Linda Gellert. EAD finding aid created 2015/12/17 by Linda Gellert. EAD finding aid revised 2016/02/12 by Brittany Kropf.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Whitewater Canal Association.

Genre(s)

- Correspondence
- Receipts (Acknowledgements)

Geographic Name(s)

- Dearborn County (Ind.)
- Lawrenceburg (Ind.)

Subject(s)

- Canal construction
- Canals
- Canals--Restoration and conservation